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Ethnolinguistic Convergence and Divergence within Dyadic Communication

Anna E. Pitman

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Abstract

This study investigated just one dependent variable within communication: ethnicity. Ethnicity often influences language. The study examined interethnic communication behaviors through the lens of the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), as influenced by one of its offshoots, Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory (ELIT). Communication within CAT is given one of three labels—convergence, divergence, and maintenance. The study included four students at Harding University: two African American females, one Hispanic American female, and one Caucasian American female. The primary participant, an African American woman, had a recorded 20 minute conversation with each of the other three participants. Discussion questions provided were formulated to create either convergence or divergence. This study utilized discourse analysis to evaluate the communication between participants, focusing on syntactical differences, discourse markers, and turn-taking silence behaviors within the dyads. Through analysis of interethnic linguistic behaviors, this study hopes to facilitate understanding of factors which govern them. These factors could, in turn, illuminate ways to foster constructive interethnic communication.

Ethnolinguistic Convergence and Divergence within Dyadic Communication

Ethnicity and language are often influenced by each other. Linguist John McWhorter (2017), in his book *Talking Back, Talking Black*, talks about his experience as a black man who can accommodate fully into Standard English:

Whites are often perplexed that educated black people don't like being called "articulate." The rub is that a white person speaking the same way often would not be called "articulate." The implication is that your not making "mistakes," alone, renders you remarkable, which feels like a bar being set awfully low. It's as if you are thought of as executing Standard English, rather than its being as integral to your soul as it is to any white person's. . . . So very many articulate white people are never called such, because no one considers it remarkable that they can speak effectively. (p. 102)

Experiences like this are common for people who speak non-standard dialects, especially within the United States. How does linguistic accommodation, sometimes called code-switching, change the way people interact interethnically? The study proposed in this paper will attempt to explore these issues through the lens of Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT).

Speech Accommodation Theory, which later became known as Communication Accommodation Theory, was posited in 1973 by Welsh social psychologist Howard Giles. Giles was influenced significantly by social identity theory (SIT) of Henri Tajfel (1978). SIT has been, and continues to be, hugely influential in the socio-psychological tradition. Research within SIT equates cultural identity maintenance with psychological health and assimilation with social health (Hecht, Jackson, & Pitts, 2005). This is significant, as those in the dominant culture have the luxury of not choosing between psychological health and social health, while those in

minority communities often do not. Research questions for the proposed study take this framework into account.

Communication within CAT is given one of three labels—convergence, divergence, and maintenance. Convergence describes communication behavior which is altered to become more similar to a communication partner's behavior; divergence describes behavior which accentuates differences (Muir, Joinson, Cotterill, & Dewdney, 2016). Maintenance refers to the lack of either convergence or divergence.

Research within CAT has focused on the way language is used in intergroup communication (Harwood, Giles, & Palomares, 2005). Intergroup communication as discussed in this proposal occurs when “either party in a social interaction defines self or other in terms of group memberships” (Harwood, Giles, & Palomares, 2005, p. 2). When group identity is salient to at least one communicative participant, intergroup communication is taking place. It is important to note that it is not necessary for *all* communicative participants to view communication as intergroup. If group identification is significant for one participant, it is considered intergroup communication.

Intergroup communication, in which group identification is a highly salient factor, is often contrasted with interpersonal communication, in which previous relationship takes precedence over group identification. Communication generally occurs with either a high focus on intergroup factors *or* a high focus on interpersonal factors. It is difficult to communicate with high saliency for both factors. It is not, however, impossible. As Harwood, Giles, and Palomares (2005) note, a conversation about cultural issues within a multiethnic marriage would be both interpersonal *and* intergroup communication.

Analyzing intergroup communication is no simple matter. Innumerable factors influence communication, rising and falling in salience. As Pitts and Harwood (2015) note,

Even everyday conversation frequently involves complex interactions requiring constant negotiation, including strategic revealing and concealing of multiple social and cultural identities. . . .Competent accommodation among interactants with different social identities requires social and communication competence that will vary from group to group, individual to individual, and involve a complicated system of cultural and linguistic code switching.

This study investigated just one dependent variable within communication: ethnicity. This research does not ignore the myriad other factors which influence convergence and divergence; however, research of linguistic communication between different ethnic groups is useful and important. Social separation of ethnic groups, often through subjugation of minority groups, propagate linguistic differences. These linguistic differences, in turn, are often used to keep minority groups in perpetual social subjugation. Even without direct cases of oppression, tensions between equally powerful ethnic groups have been exacerbated by miscommunication.

In many places, ethnic distinction can be determined from simply hearing a few words or phrases. In the United States, perceptual cues can be used to differentiate between African American and European American voices with surprising accuracy (Thomas & Reaser, 2004). This is not at all to say that all ethnically-based dialects are harmful (though the distinction can be used to harm). These are rich and complex linguistic systems, which convey belonging to their users. Understanding the factors which influence convergence or divergence in

communication can be helpful when considering how to facilitate constructive conversation between ethnicities.

Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory (ELIT) developed naturally out of CAT. Giles and Johnson (1987) proposed ELIT as a way to understand ethnicity and language as they relate to each other in different social settings. With ELIT, Giles and Johnson (1987) attempted to expose the underlying social psychological factors affecting interethnic communication. Research within ELIT suggests that individuals who identify themselves strongly with a group are more likely to view a given communication situation as intergroup, and are more likely to converge because of the psychological factors inherent within that cognizance (Pitts & Harwood, 2015).

Understanding these factors could, in turn, illuminate ways to foster constructive interethnic communication. ELIT has influenced the goals and methods of this study, though it was not used explicitly as a theoretical lens.

Method

Participants

The study included four students at Harding University: two African American females, one Hispanic American female, and one Caucasian American female. Each of the participants identified as being from the southern United States and were native English speakers. In addition, each participant was within two university classifications of one another. They were recruited for this study through different means, including recruitments in introductory-level English courses. Participants were also asked to participate in consideration of their acquaintance with the other participants; none of the participants knew each other before this recorded interaction.

Each participant provided informed consent before participating, and participants' identities were protected by the use of letters in accordance with their group. The groupings are as follows:

A: African American female (primary participant)

B1: African American female (secondary participant)

B2: Caucasian American female (secondary participant)

B3: Hispanic American female

Participants were compensated for participation.

Design

To decrease the inherent subjectivity of this qualitative study, all of the participants were females within two years in age and students at the same university. In addition, they all identified as being from the southern region of the United States. The primary participant, an African American woman, had a recorded and timed conversation with each of the other three participants. Discussion questions were provided to the members of each dyad. Three of the provided questions (listed in Appendix D) were deemed likely to create convergence, and the other three likely to create divergence. Each conversational dyad—one intraethnic, the other two interethnic—were analyzed for convergent and divergent linguistic behaviors.

Procedure

Each participant, after signing their informed consent to participate, completed a short survey regarding ethnicity. The survey was a modification of The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) developed by Phinney (1992). The purpose of this survey was to raise consciousness of participants' respective identities as a salient factor before the conversations.

Each dyad read and discussed their two questions, led by A, the primary participant. A and her conversation partner were instructed to talk about anything, as long as they discussed one of the convergence-likely questions and one of the divergence-likely questions. Each discussion lasted 20 minutes. At the end of their participation in the study, each woman was debriefed regarding the purpose of the study and encouraged to ask any questions about the process.

Hypotheses and Research Questions

Women seem to be more likely to converge than men (Nilsson, 2015; Van Hofwegen, 2015). Whether this is a biological or socially conditioned response is a discussion not within the scope of this study. The assumption did, however, influence the amount of convergence expected in this study. Since all of the participants in the study were young females, a demographic more likely to converge, the first hypothesis was as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Convergence within the dyads will be high during the communication prompted by the first, convergence-likely question.

There was a second question, with a topic more likely to create divergence, as it was expected to enhance the salience of ethnicity. This precipitated hypothesis two:

Hypothesis 2: Divergence will occur during the communication prompted by the second, divergence-likely question.

As a study of this kind had not been done within CAT, this study was also be guided by research questions which could not yet be formed into hypotheses:

Research Question 1: How much accommodation will happen between the African American participant and the Caucasian American participant?

Research Question 2: Will the accommodation of that dyad be similar to the African American-Hispanic American dyad? If not, what are the differences?

Research Question 3: What will be the turn-taking effects for each dyad?

Research Question 4: Will the members of the intraethnic dyad be more likely to interrupt one another or is the opposite true?

Research Question 4 was not addressed in this study, as the direction of analysis was more conducive to the former research questions, but future analysis of this data may address this question.

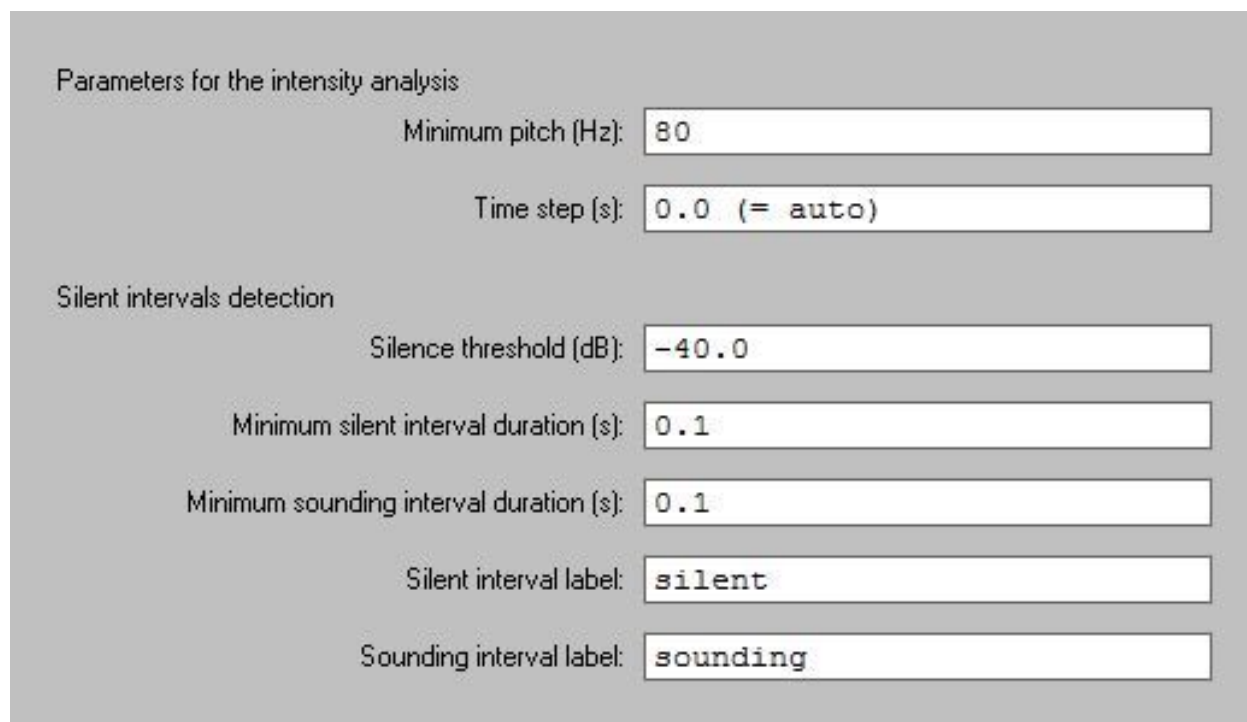
The data collected through this study were analyzed through the methods of discourse analysis—more specifically, conversation analysis. Discourse markers (e.g. “um,” “well,” “you know”) are important within discourse analysis. In addition, turn-taking plays a prominent role for discourse analysts (Tannen, n.d.).

This study focused on syntactical differences, silences in conversation, discourse markers, and turn-taking behaviors within the dyads. Discourse analysis is a useful and efficient tool for ethnolinguistic study. Deborah Tannen (n.d.) says, “By comparing how people in different cultures use language, discourse analysts hope to make a contribution to improving cross-cultural understanding” (para. 5). That is what this study hoped to achieve through discourse analysis within CAT, while being influenced by ELIT.

Results

As previously mentioned, the data were analyzed using conversation analysis through the theoretical lens of Communication Accommodation Theory. Each conversation was first entered into Praat software (Boersma & Weenink) for analysis. The Praat software was used to

determine the amount and duration of silence intervals. The parameters for the silent interval analysis are pictured below:



The image shows a screenshot of the 'Parameters for the intensity analysis' window in Praat software. The window is divided into two sections: 'Parameters for the intensity analysis' and 'Silent intervals detection'. The first section contains 'Minimum pitch (Hz)' set to 80 and 'Time step (s)' set to 0.0 (= auto). The second section contains 'Silence threshold (dB)' set to -40.0, 'Minimum silent interval duration (s)' set to 0.1, 'Minimum sounding interval duration (s)' set to 0.1, 'Silent interval label' set to silent, and 'Sounding interval label' set to sounding.

Section	Parameter	Value
Parameters for the intensity analysis	Minimum pitch (Hz):	80
	Time step (s):	0.0 (= auto)
Silent intervals detection	Silence threshold (dB):	-40.0
	Minimum silent interval duration (s):	0.1
	Minimum sounding interval duration (s):	0.1
	Silent interval label:	silent
	Sounding interval label:	sounding

Figure 1. Silent Interval Analysis. Praat software (Boersma & Weenink).

As is shown in the figure, the minimum silent interval duration is one-tenth of a second. Silence signals trouble in a conversation (Pietikäinen, 2018). This study uses one-tenth of a second, the time threshold Stokoe (2015) suggested as the amount of time generally acceptable within well-flowing conversation. Since the original conversations were pitch-shifted to protect the identities of the participants, the minimum silence interval pitch was lowered to 80Hz. This did lead to some subjectively inaccurate silent or sounding times; this may be due to shortcomings in the recording equipment. However, the same parameters were used on all conversations and the few subjectively inaccurate instances were not changed to maintain continuity within the Praat software system. One parameter change was made in the divergent cross-section of the

Participant A and Participant B2 dyad. The minimum dB level was sometimes changed from -40dB to -50dB due to recording differences between dyads. This change was made as needed to avoid misleading silence data.

The amount of conversational overlap is related to the silences analyzed through Praat. Women tend to create more conversational overlap than men. A higher degree of conversation overlap and interruptions is associated in this context with positive conversational involvement:

[Linguist Deborah] Tannen distinguishes, for example, between the ways that men and women interrupt each other. Although the actions sound similar, the interpretations are quite different. Men see interruptions as conversational bullying, denoting hostility and manipulation. Women see them as cooperative overlapping, meaning mutual support and involvement. (Armstrong, 1996)

For the purposes of this study, conversational overlap and lack of silence shown in conversational analysis were considered convergent behaviors. This was a unique direction for conversation analysis study, but in line with the fusion of CAT and conversation analysis contained in this study.

Analysis of this data was done both holistically and within cross-sections of data. For each dyad, 35-second cross-sections were transcribed and examined in detail. A 35-second convergent period and divergent period were analyzed within each dyad. This resulted in 6 detailed transcriptions, recorded in Appendices A, B, and C.

B2 and A (interethnic communication)

Convergence. A great amount of convergence was observed in the conversation between Participant B2 (white female) and Participant A. The conversation seemed to start at an

interpersonal level more than an interethnic one. As was anticipated in hypothesis 1, convergence was high in the beginning of the conversation. Observe the following rapport-building interaction (transcribed completely in Appendix B):

- 1 B2: [hh] That's good I mean
- 2 (1.0)
- 3 A: I mean yeah (.) if you don't got weird friends
- 4 B2: Yeah [ya know] you right
- 5 A: What are you doin?
- 6 B2: What are you doin. Especially here I don't know,
- 7 A: Especially here, yes. [yea:hhhh] yes.

This is a clear example of linguistic convergence. Each participant is repeating almost exactly what the other is saying. Even words which are not important for the content are repeated, as seen in the *I mean* in lines 1 and 3, *what are you doin?* in lines 5 and 6, and *especially here* in lines 6 and 7.

There are very few silences in this section of the conversation, another sign of convergence. In the conversation between Participants B2 and A, there were 459 silences which lasted more than .1 second. The 35-second detailed analysis of this portion of the conversation contained 8 silences with a combined total silence time of 2.4 seconds.

Participant B2 also converged in a traditional interethnic way with her deletion of the conjugated verb *to be*, a dialectal feature of Black English (McWhorter, 2017). It is important to consider the context of this act of convergence. In line 3, Participant A uses the double negative feature associated with Black English: "if you don't got weird friends." In the very next line, Participant B2 responds with "you right," the *to be* deletion also associated with Black English, in line 4. This is an example of dialectal convergence, which can be fraught, especially in

interethnic contexts in the United States. This act of convergence by participant B2 is well-received by Participant A, as the conversation continues in the convergent vein previously seen.

Divergence. There were also moments of divergence within the conversation between Participants B2 and A, as seen in the following excerpt from the conversation (transcribed in Appendix B):

- 7 B2: Yeah (.) and so [that's weird to me] the whole time he's just like (.) yeah no it's not
 8 very good i was like (1.6) [he said] is it worth watching then?
 9 A: He's a guy too [yeah] so you'd expect him to be like (.) oh yeah, she's (.8) she's hot
 so
 10 (.2) [hhh] (.) i like the movie [hh] (.3) that's all i hear from a lot of [really?] people
 11 too (.6) yeah
 12 (.4)

The most immediately striking part of this conversation is the amount of silence within this section of the conversation. As previously noted, silences within conversations are seen as points of divergence. The full 35-second transcription of this data show 16 silences, lasting 7.3 seconds. This is significant when contrasted with the 8 silences in the convergent cross-section of Participants B2 and A, lasting 2.4 seconds.

This section is not completely divergent, however. This can be seen in the repetition of the discourse marker *yeah*. Researchers within conversation analysis have found that *yeah* specifically is used more often among strangers than friends (Stokoe, 2015), making it either an act of convergence or divergence, depending on the perspective taken. One could consider it convergence, as it is matching the expression of the other participant. However, since it is a

discourse marker used more often with people who are strangers than friends, it could be an implicit act of distancing.

B3 and A (interethnic communication)

Convergence. The conversation between Participant B3 (Hispanic female) and Participant A was, on the whole, less convergent than the other dyads. The 35-second cross-section section of convergence contained 16 silences, lasting for a total of 5.45 seconds.

5 B3: yeah

6 A: okay was it goo::d, was it

7 B3: [it was really good i actually want to watch it again (.) t(hh)oday yeah I told my
8 friends about it (.) and I was like (.) you need to watch this movie. [really] (.) yeah.

9 A: but it wasn't (.) were the ratings that good?

Both the convergent and divergent behavior in this dyad were characterized by a search for information. Participant A spent much of the conversation asking direct questions, sometimes answered quickly by Participant B3 (generally convergence) and often evaded (generally divergence) by Participant B3. This was an example of different communication tactics—convergence and divergence—both used in search of social approval. This can also be noted in the next section, detailing divergence as a result of Participant B3's evasion.

Divergence. The divergence in this dyad was not limited to silences. Participant B3 used a lot of discourse markers in this conversation, while Participant A actually decreased her use of discourse markers. Both participants, then, exhibited divergent behavior. Note the following example, with discourse markers bolded for legibility:

6 A: I mind my bu:siness (.2) in chapel. (.4) I'm normally asleep. (1) [mhhhm(hhh)]

7 (.4) you are too?

8 B3: **Umm** (.) sometimes [or studying (.) or something] **Yeah**

- 9 A: Or listening. (.4)
 10 B3: **Yeah** (.6) **umm** (.) [that's good] **yeah**, i'll fall asleep sometimes. (.2) But. **yeah**.
 11 (1.1) Sometimes (1.6) **yeah**. ((hh))

Every discourse marker in this excerpt was uttered by Participant B3, while Participant A used no discourse markers. Throughout the conversation, Participant A increased her use of *like* in relation to use within the other dyads. Other discourse marker use from Participant A did not differ significantly in this dyad compared with the other two (as seen in Table 1 in Appendix E).

As noted earlier, this portion of the conversation also followed the pattern shown in the convergent excerpt. Participant A made a statement about her chapel habits. Chapel, a requirement at the participants' university, was generally an easy topic for convergent behavior. The socially acceptable ways to respond to chapel were enumerated in lines 6 and 8 (bolded for clarity):

- 6 A: I **mind my bu:siness** (.2) in chapel. (.4) I'm normally **asleep**. (1) [mhhhm.(hhh)]
 7 (.4) you are too?
 8 B3: Umm (.) sometimes [or **studying** (.) or **something**] Yeah

The socially acceptable options for chapel at this university were minding one's business, sleeping, or studying. Participant B3 understood this, but it seems from her hesitation that she actually enjoyed chapel. Admitting that she paid attention would be likely to create social distance between them, so Participant B3 was loath to commit that social misstep. Participant A continued with her pressing, and Participant B3 admitted that she listened during chapel. To repair some of her social credibility, she noted that she *did* fall asleep sometimes.

B1 and A (intraethnic communication)

Convergence. There was not a significant difference between convergent behaviors in the intraethnic dyad between Participants B1 and A. As in the other dyads, there were convergent and divergent moments throughout the conversation. The types of convergence were also similar to other dyads. Below is a representative convergent section (transcribed in Appendix A):

- 8 B1: I tried to find the comic part, we just kinda laughed [hh] I was watching it with my
 9 friends a \$couple weeks ago we were just kinda laughing at it even though
 10 °(unintelligible)° [it is funny
 11 A: especially when she's just sick in her bed [and yeah] yeah like [oh >we people who
 12 are like<
 13 B1: why are you h(hhh)e::re (.) <we made jokes> about it for a while [(for re::al)

The most notable part of this convergence—and throughout the convergent moments of the dyad—is the low number of silences. There was a lot of positive interruption in this cross-section, centered on a discussion of the popular horror film *The Exorcist* prompted by one of the convergence-likely questions presented. This is representative of the convergence found throughout the conversation. It is also interesting to note that this dyad was the most likely to focus on personal topics, such as friendship conflicts and career goals. There was not much dialectal convergence, which will be discussed in the next section.

Divergence. The intraethnic dyad produced 496 silences in the 20-minute conversation. This was the highest number of silences recorded in all three dyads.

- 9 B1: They made it look kinda real though (1.2)
 10 A: Yeah
 11 (1.3)
 12 B1: Yeah i dunwanna be a babysitter now who knows what kinda trouble you can get into
 13 (1.1)

- 14 A: Who knows and really I just (.6) I'm glad I didn't have a babysitter (.3) [mhm] (.3) I'm
 15 glad I just had my parents (.)

There was not a higher use of Black English dialectal features in this dyad. Participant A used Black English features throughout all conversations. Participant B1 did not exhibit any evidence that she was a speaker of Black English, which may have caused the dialectal convergence to be similar to the other, interethnic dyads. The results of the Multi-Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) survey provided a possible insight. Participant A noted on the MEIM a high identification with African-American culture, people, and traditions. Participant B1 did not show a high identification, strongly disagreeing with many of the cultural identity statements, such as *I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group and I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music, or customs*. There was one moment of dialectal convergence in which Participant A noted the importance of having a few close friends *you can be real with*. Participant B3 replied, *you have to be careful who you "be real" with though*. Syntactically speaking, this was the only moment of Black English convergence.

Discourse Markers

Participant A's use of discourse markers is noted below. The use of discourse markers varied between dyads, but not significantly. The highest incidence, *like* in dyad A/B3, was likely prompted by the higher use of *like* by B3—although B3 also used *yeah* at a very high rate without convergence in that area from Participant A. This is in keeping with the other findings between the conversations.

Discourse Marker	A with B2	A with B3	A with B1
Yeah	20	24	32
Oh	5	2	4
Really	4	1	3
Mhmm	22	18	33
Like	34	48	36
You know	2	1	3
Um	4	2	1

Table 1. Participant A's use of discourse markers in each 20 minute conversation dyad.

Discussion

Overall, there was a high amount of convergent behavior among all of the dyads. This is consistent with previous research, especially considering the accommodative behavior of young females (Van Hofwegen, 2015). The conversations were also, by design, highly intragroup. All of the participants were female, from the same area of the United States, and around the same age. The higher likelihood of interaction later occasioned by enrollment at the same small university may have also increased the likelihood of convergent behavior. It is also possible that the knowledge that group salience was being observed may have made convergence happen more than it might have under more natural conditions.

Future direction of this research could include more analysis of this data, possibly using phonological analysis or a greater study of interruptions within the dyads and discourse marker distinctions. More representation from members of other ethnicities and cultures would also be interesting to study using this method of analysis. In addition, a replication of this study using

more subjects would make quantitative data more accessible and generalizable. An interethnic communication study between men and mixed-gender dyads would be a variable worth investigation as well.

Sweeping generalizations are impossible to make with only three dyads to analyze. The purpose of this study was not, however, to make sweeping generalizations, but to analyze those dyads as ethnographically significant. Perhaps they are not microcosms, but they may open up a new line of questions for future study in communication accommodation. This study's limitation was also its strength. A detailed analysis of a few dyads, rather than mass analysis of hundreds or thousands, can give insight that is hard to achieve with mass subjects. As many communicators know, there is persuasive power in a story. Perhaps advances in constructive, respectful interethnic communication will not come from statistics, but from an examination of one resonant conversation.

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Appendix A

B1 (black female) and A (primary participant)

Convergence and Divergence Transcriptions

 CONVERGENCE: *The Exorcist*

- 1 B1: the first thing that came to mind was the exorcist^ (.5) that movie's we:ird. (.8) Cause
 2 it's like, in like the (.3) 70s [the 70s ye::s] or something. Yeah >it just looks really weird<
 3 I'm just like weumm i >don't know about this<
 4 A: yes
 5 B1: but i watched it so (.5) (unintelligible) °it was wild°
 6 A: you made it through the whole movie? [I di:d] I don't even think I made it through it
 7 (.5)
 8 B1: I tried to find the comic part, we just kinda laughed [hh] i was watching it with my
 9 friends a \$couple weeks ago we were just kinda laughing at it even though
 10 °(unintelligible)° [it is funny
 11 A: especially when she's just sick in her bed [and yeah] yeah like [oh >we people who
 12 are like<
 13 B1: why are you k(hhh)e::re (.) <we made jokes> about it for a while [(for re::al)
 14 A: (.9) it looks (.25) sick...

SILENCE: 8 silences, 3.85 seconds

DIVERGENCE: *The Babysitter*

- 1 (2.2)
2 A: I don't remember that (.2) I would've remembered that (.7)
3 B1: I need a second one. I need closure
4 A: Oh yeah i do remember that car hitting her through the house
5 B1: [That was (.3) wild [hh] i was like (.1) i don't think that could happen but
6 A: (hh) at all
7 B1: Ok!
8 A: (.4) But they reached for it. they reached
9 B1: They made it look kinda real though (1.2)
10 A: Yeah
11 (1.3)
12 B1: Yeah i dunwanna be a babysitter now who knows what kinda trouble you can get into
13 (1.1)
14 A: Who knows and really I just (.6) I'm glad I didn't have a babysitter (.3) [mhm] (.3) I'm
15 glad I just had my parents (.)

SILENCE: 13 silences, 8.8 seconds

TOTAL CONVERSATION SILENCES: 496 over .1 second

Appendix B

B2 (white female) and A (primary participant)

Convergence and Divergence Transcriptions

CONVERGENCE: The Harding Air

- 1 B2: [hh] That's good I mean
2 (1.0)
3 A: I mean yeah (.) if you don't got weird friends
4 B2: Yeah [ya know] you right
5 A: What are you doin?
6 B2: What are you doin. Especially here I don't know,
7 A: Especially here, yes. [yeahhhh] yes. tur...Everybody's a little weird here. It's
8 something (.5) in the air
9 (.2)
10 B2: It's something in the yeah, [harding air] in the harding bubble air [yes] It's just very
11 contained
12 A: Is it--or is it searcy? (.4)
13 B2: Oh maybe [searcy]
14 B2: It's arkansas [um]
15 A: Yeah (.2) arkansas.
16 B2: Arkansas air
17 A: Where're you from?

SILENCE: 8 silences, 2.4 seconds

DIVERGENCE: *Wonder Woman*

1 (.7)

2 B2: Also the guy next to me was like “oh you’re watching that (.4) I’m not gonna tell you
3 what I think about it til the end.” (.6) but then he was like “I didn’t like it” (.2) and I was
4 like

5 (1.0)

6 A: Really? (.)

7 B2: Yeah (.) and so [that’s weird to me] the whole time he’s just like (.) yeah no it’s not
8 very good i was like (1.6) [he said] is it worth watching then?

9 A: He’s a guy too [yeah] so you’d expect him to be like (.)oh yeah, she’s (.8) she’s hot so
10 (.2) [hhh] (.) i like the movie [hh] (.3) that’s all I hear from a lot of [really?] people
11 too (.6) yeah

12 (.4)

13 B2: I feel like a lot of people have told me they--well I feel like no I feel like when it first
14 came out

SILENCE: 16 silences, 7.3 seconds

TOTAL CONVERSATION SILENCES: 459 over .1 second

Appendix C

B3 (hispanic female) and A (primary participant)

Convergence and Divergence Transcriptions

CONVERGENCE: *The Preacher's Kid*

- 1 B3: yeah
- 2 A: Preacher's kid [it's a really good movie] i don't know (.)
- 3 B3: Yeah (.)
- 4 A: it sounds interesting cuz I do like her (1.25)
- 5 B3: yeah
- 6 A: okay was it goo::d, was it
- 7 B3: [it was really good i actually want to watch it again (.) t(hh)oday yeah I told my
- 8 friends about it (.) and I was like (.) you need to watch this movie. [really] (.) yeah.
- 9 A: but it wasn't (.) were the ratings that good?
- 10 (.2)
- 11 B3: Um (.2) I think so (.3) [hmm] I don't know, I guess it came out a long time ago
- 12 (.3) like (.3) I don't know (1.2) yeah I don't remember it being in theaters, but (.9)
- 13 it probably did come out in theaters
- 14 A: Wo::w
- 15 B3: yeah [I wanna see this now] yeah (.) you should (hh).

SILENCE: 16 silences, 5.45 seconds

DIVERGENCE: Sleeping in Chapel (14:00)

- 1 (.2)
- 2 B3: Yeah (1.5) yeah. I don't think i saw a response (.) from the first person he did it
- 3 to, cuz i was probly like (.6) seriously: (.7) (hh) i dunno.
- 4 A: [My go:sh
- 5 (1.2)
- 6 A: I mind my bu:siness (.2) in chapel. (.4) I'm normally asleep. (1) [mhhhm(hhh)]
- 7 (.4) you are too?
- 8 B3: Umm (.) sometimes [or studying (.) or something] Yeah
- 9 A: Or listening. (.4)
- 10 B3: Yeah (.6) umm (.) [that's good] yeah, i'll fall asleep sometimes. (.2) But. yeah.
- 11 (1.1) Sometimes (1.6) yeah. ((hh))

SILENCE: 18 silences, 10.5 seconds

TOTAL CONVERSATION SILENCES: 480 over .1 second

Appendix D

Discussion Questions

Category 1: Convergence-likely questions

What's the strangest movie you have ever seen? Describe it.

What was the last movie you watched? How was it?

What is something you can't stop watching on Netflix/Hulu?

Category 2: Divergence-likely questions

Are you a sports fan? What was the last game you watched?

Is your ethnicity important to you? If so, in what way?*

Think of the most annoying person you know and describe them without using physical identifying information (name, accent, clothes, speech patterns, hairstyle). Is it easy or hard to describe them?

*This was the only question *not* chosen as a discussion topic for any dyad.

Appendix E

Table 1

Discourse Marker	A with B2	A with B3	A with B1
Yeah	20	24	32
Oh	5	2	4
Really	4	1	3
Mmhmm	22	18	33
Like	34	48	36
You know	2	1	3
Um	4	2	1

Table 1. Participant A's use of discourse markers in each 20 minute conversation dyad.

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